Annual Report

1985-1986

Alberta

DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING

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Alberta

MINISTER OF MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS
AND GOVERNMENT HOUSE LEADER

227 Legislature Building, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada T5K 2B6 403/427-3744

February 16, 1987

To the Honourable David J. Carter
Speaker of the Assembly

Sir:

I have the honour to submit the Annual Report of the Alberta Department of Housing for the period of April 1, 1985 to March 31, 1986.

Respectfully submitted,

Neil Crawford

Neil Crawford
Minister

Alberta
MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS

Office of the Deputy Minister

Jarvis Building, 9925 - 107 Street, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada T5K 2H9 403/427-4826

Honourable Neil Crawford,
Minister of Municipal Affairs
Government of Alberta
224 Legislature Building

Dear Sir:

I am submitting herewith the Annual Report on the activities of the Alberta Department of Housing for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1986.

Respectfully submitted,

Archie R. Grover
Deputy Minister

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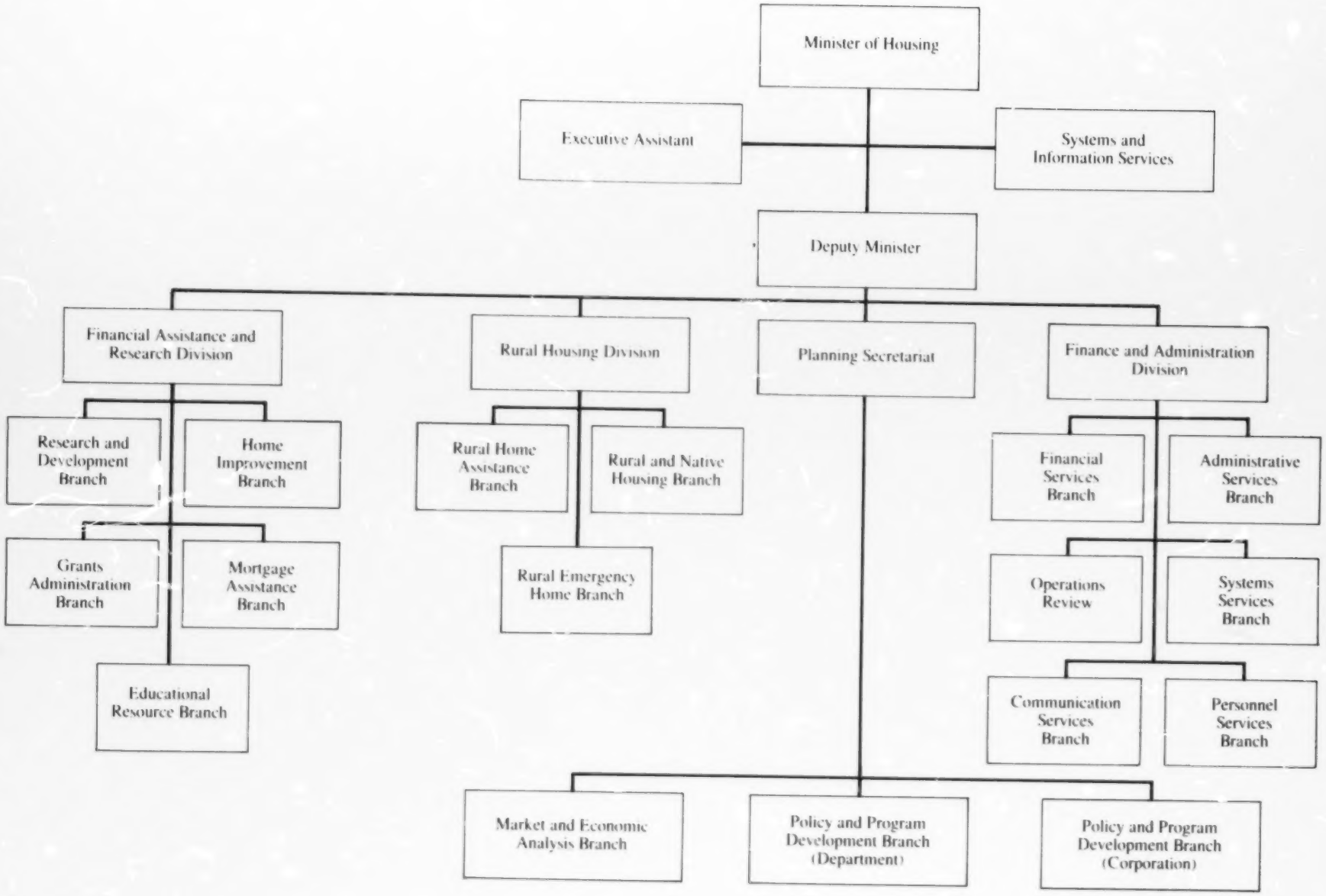
Alberta Department of Housing
March 31, 1986



I. Financial Assistance and Research Division

The Financial Assistance and Research Division administers grants in the areas of home improvement, mortgage assistance, housing research and financial incentives for rental housing. The division is also responsible for technical research and development and for educational activities in the areas of housing and land development.

The division has five branches: Research and Development, Educational Resource, Home Improvement, Grants Administration and Mortgage Assistance.

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT BRANCH

The main responsibility of the Research and Development Branch is to conduct and support housing research and development projects which offer to improve housing quality, reduce housing costs, or contribute to the long term viability and competitiveness of Alberta's housing industry. Research and development priorities during the 1985/86 fiscal year were building design, construction technology, energy conservation, site and subdivision design, site servicing technology, residential building products and computer applications.

The branch carried out a number of projects through its directed housing research and development program, but most research and development work was completed through its Innovative Housing Grants Program. This program provides grants of up to $25,000 to industry, organizations and individuals for approved research, design, evaluation and test projects. A limited number of grants up to $50,000 are available to assist in defraying the cost of large scale demonstration projects.

In 1985/86, 25 projects were completed. Reports were compiled and distributed to relevant groups and individuals to encourage the adoption of innovations. The number of reports distributed by the branch continued to increase from 5500 in 1984/85 to 6000 in 1985/86, mainly in response to requests from members of the housing industry.

The branch also administered:

— the 1985 Competition for Alberta Awards of Excellence in Housing Design;

— Alberta Department of Housing land banks; and

— housing registries, providing housing referral services.

Research and Development Projects

Reports issued for major projects completed during the year are outlined below:

Construction Experience with the Airtight Drywall Approach (A.D.A.) Demonstration Houses
by Joseph Lstiburek

Since the construction of three demonstration houses in 1984 to illustrate this new energy-efficient, cost-effective method of construction, a performance monitoring program has been initiated. Results to date confirm the efficiency of A.D.A., both in terms of construction costs and low energy consumption. Furthermore, since completion of the project and dissemination of this report, interest in this method of construction has grown and builders in a number of Canadian provinces and American states have adopted it.

A Seniors' Home - Designs for Independent Living
by David Whiting and Bill Woodward

This report identifies and illustrates appropriate designs for reasonably priced, single-detached housing for senior citizens, highlighting features particularly important to seniors. The study is timely and relevant, primarily because of the anticipated rapid increase in the growth of the senior population.

Residential Building Products Study
by HLA Consultants

This study developed insights into the types and quantities of residential building products used and produced in Alberta, and gave a preliminary assessment of import substitution and export opportunities for Alberta residential building products manufacturers. The final report on the project has been in high demand by manufacturers and has proven helpful to them in identifying potential market opportunities.

Alberta Export Home
by Joseph Skvaril

The branch provided assistance for the design, development and assessment of a flexible, prefabricated housing system intended for export. Since then, the product has been refined with further assistance made available through the branch and has been marketed to Pacific Rim Countries. These efforts have resulted in some promising commercial agreements which may lead to significant sales of this housing system in foreign markets.

Residential Subdivision Servicing and Design Practices by DeLCan, De Leuw Cather, Western Ltd.

This study examined those elements of subdivision servicing and design which have demonstrated potential for capital cost saving without adversely affecting maintenance costs, and demonstrates the applicability of these elements to Alberta municipalities. The resulting report is intended as a reference document which provides the rationale and basis for more cost-effective standards. An accompanying manual will assist municipalities and the development industry in exchanging information on current practices and ideas for longer term improvement.

Research and Design Analysis Routine by Sunearth Software Inc.

This project developed a comprehensive computer software program to accurately estimate construction costs for a range of alternate designs and building assemblies in low- and mid-rise buildings. Designed and available from Sunearth Software Inc. in Edmonton, the system runs on IBM-PC compatible micro-computer hardware. The program is generating substantial interest in many North American centres.

Other Projects

The following projects also were completed with reports compiled and distributed:

— An Innovative Prototype for Higher Density Family Accommodation
by the Cunningham Partnership;

— Industrialized Housing: The Japanese Experience
by James McKellar;

— Tie Support System for Insulated Masonry Veneer Construction
by Dr. M.A. Hatzinikolas;

— Air Leakage in Existing Town Houses
by J.A. Love and R.S. Passmore; and

— Residential Repair and Renovation in Alberta
by the Alberta Home Builders' Association (AHBA)

The branch also has been involved with Alberta Economic Development in a number of initiatives to support the export of Alberta building materials and technology to Japan and other Pacific countries.

Competition for Alberta Awards of Excellence in Housing Design recognizes the achievements of builders who build and market high quality, moderately-priced housing in Alberta and focuses public attention on the best examples of such housing. This was the second year of the Competition. For this Competition, two categories were established to reflect the different cost categories existing in the moderately-priced housing market.

Category 1 was for homes with hard construction costs (material and labour costs) under $40,000 and Category 2 for homes with hard construction costs under $50,000. Up to five awards of $5,000 each were available in each category for different contest areas. An additional special award of $10,000 was presented to the overall winner in each category.

The winning entries are listed below:

Overall Winners:

Category 1	Flatford Model, Red Deer Gerald W. Pilon, Contractor
Category 2	Chelsea Model, Calgary Riverwood Homes (1984) Ltd.

Category 1:

Edmonton	Truman Model Residential Construction Group Inc.
Calgary	Riviera Model Elwood Holdings Ltd.
All Other Cities	Empress Model, Red Deer Fanta Construction Ltd.
All Other Areas	Cherrywood Model, Blackfalds Melcor Homes

Category 2:

Edmonton	Rundle Model, St. Albert Residential Construction Group Inc.
All Other Cities	Sunrise Series Model, Medicine Hat Citizen Homes Essex Model, Red Deer Laebon Developments Ltd.
All Other Areas	Sunrise Model, Bentley Sprucehill Construction Ltd.

The Competition will be held again in 1986.

Housing Registry Program provides funding to nine housing registries. The primary purpose of the housing registries is to act as a housing referral service for special groups. Other activities of the housing registries are to provide information on housing programs to the public and to gather housing information. Housing registries serve senior citizens, the handicapped, the "hard-to-house" and native people.

Edmonton:
Senior Citizens Housing Registry
Accessible Housing Registry (serving the handicapped)
Operation Friendship (serving the hard-to-house)
Boyle Street Co-op (also serving the hard-to-house)
Metis Urban Housing Corporation

Calgary:
Senior Citizens Housing Registry
Handicapped Housing Registry

Lethbridge:
Senior Citizens Housing Registry

Medicine Hat:
Senior Citizens Housing Registry

EDUCATIONAL RESOURCE BRANCH

The Educational Resource Branch was established in March 1985 as a result of the reorganization of the Co-operative Housing Action Program Branch. The Branch is responsible for developing self-help educational material on housing construction, for providing information and organizational assistance to seniors' groups and other groups interested in self-help housing, and to assist the housing industry, institutions and condominium groups in educational activities.

The initial task of the Educational Resource Branch was the winddown of the Co-operative Housing Action Program, which involved closing branch offices in three communities and completing training courses in Edmonton (19 families in two courses) and in Fort McMurray (26 families in six courses). The branch also revised its self-help house construction manual for reference use. During 1985/86, 108 self-help construction manuals were distributed.

The branch provided organizational and construction assistance to the Parkvale seniors' group in Red Deer as they built their 47-unit housing project. Three other seniors' groups are now seeking similar assistance from the Educational Resource Branch. The branch also assisted condominium groups and reviewed the informational requirements of special needs groups and educational institutions.

HOME IMPROVEMENT BRANCH

The Home Improvement Branch is responsible for the delivery of the Seniors' Home Improvement Program and the Home Adaptation Program.

Seniors' Home Improvement Program was introduced in December 1982 as the successor to the Alberta Pioneers' Repair Program.

The Seniors' Home Improvement Program provides assistance to low- and moderate-income senior citizen homeowners in Alberta to enable them to repair or improve their homes. The program helps:

— seniors to remain in their homes longer and keep their homes in good repair;

— to maintain the quality of Alberta's housing stock; and

— to increase activity in the home repair and renovation sector of the housing industry.

The Seniors' Home Improvement Program is administered in conjunction with participating financial institutions. With the approval of the Home Improvement Branch, the financial institution reimburses approved applicants for eligible ependitures. Eligible expenditures include labour or materials purchased by applicants to make permanent repairs or improvements to their home.

As a special service to Alberta's 43 Indian Bands, a native liaison officer assists these groups.

Spot inspections are undertaken by inspectors of the branch to monitor claims made for materials purchased or services performed under the Seniors' Home Improvement Program. During 1985/86, 1,773 inspections were completed.

In addition, the branch responds to requests from seniors to help resolve disputes between applicants and contractors or suppliers.

Since the inception of the program, 55,972 applications have been approved for grants totalling $156,593,000. Of this number, 48,179 (86 per cent) were approved for the maximum grant amount of $3,000; 4,263 (eight per cent) received $2,000; and 3,530 (six per cent) were eligible to receive $1,000. In addition, $2,568,000 in supplementary grants were approved for 2,075 applicants whose initial application was not approved for the full $3,000 grant. Total expenditures made by seniors to the end of this fiscal year amounted to $125,240,309.

During the 1985/86 fiscal year, 4,653 grants were approved, requiring commitment of $12,466,000. Expenditures by seniors during this period amounted to $21,749,652.

Home Adaptation Program provides grants of $1,000 to homeowners and tenants who are wheelchair users or who have a wheelchair user residing with them, as well as to landlords who are willing to adapt units for rental to wheelchair users. The grant is for adaptations which will provide the wheelchair user access to the residence and mobility within the home.

Homeowners or tenants must have resided in Alberta for the past year and have a current adjusted family income of not more than $25,500 per year. Landlords who apply must be willing to make adaptations to an existing or proposed residential building to accommodate the wheelchair user.

Since the introduction of the Home Adaptation Program on April 1, 1978, 1,203 applications have been approved for a total commitment of $1,242,000. Of the approved applications, 1,100 (91 per cent) were homeowners, 78 (six per cent) were tenants and 25 (three per cent) were landlords. A total of $948,796 has been expended since commencement of the program.

During the 1985/86 fiscal year a total of 145 applications were approved for a commitment of $150,000. Expenditures during this period amounted to $121,471.

GRANTS ADMINISTRATION BRANCH

The Grants Administration Branch provided assistance to Albertans through three programs:

Unique Homes Assistance Program,

Alberta Rental Investment Incentive Program, and

Extended Alberta Rental Investment Incentive Program.

Unique Homes Assistance Program provides grants to eligible senior citizen homes for 75 per cent of justifiable deficits up to $4.80 per resident, per day. Justifiable deficits are defined as the shortfall between revenue (resident contributions and investment income) and eligible costs for care and services.

The eight homes receiving funding provide levels of care which generally fall between that offered in lodges and that offered in nursing homes.

Calgary - Salvation Army Sunset Home	$ 48,322
Calgary - Bethany Care	$ 80,186
Coaldale - Mennonite Home	$ 16,596
Edmonton - Salvation Army Sunset Home	$ 70,080
Edmonton - Emmanuel Home	$ 15,768
Hythe - Pioneer Home	$123,824
Medicine Hat - Haven of Rest	$130,527
Wetaskiwin - Good Shepherd	$ 50,915
TOTAL 1985/86	$536,215

Alberta Rental Investment Incentive Program was designed to encourage the construction of more rental housing for Albertans in 1980 and 1981 by providing an extra incentive for investors/developers who commenced construction on a multiple unit residential building (MURB) during that period. Under the program, corporations taxable in the Province apply for a tax credit and individuals apply for a tax rebate.

The credit or rebate amount per residential unit is five per cent of eligible construction costs, up to a maximum of $3,000. The total rebate per year cannot exceed Alberta Income Tax payable. However, if an applicant's tax payable is less than the total eligible incentive, the unpaid balance may be carried forward into subsequent years (up to July 1, 1990) until the full amount of the rebate/credit has been claimed.

A total of 460 tax rebate applications were processed during the 1985/86 fiscal year representing an expenditure of $1,165,038.

Extended Alberta Rental Investment Incentive Program is similar to the Alberta Rental Investment Incentive Program except that it applies to MURB's started in 1982 and 1983. Under this program corporations receive a refundable tax credit and individuals receive payment in the form of a lump sum grant.

For construction starts in 1982, the incentive amount was 12.5 per cent of eligible construction costs up to a maximum of $8,000 per unit. For starts in 1983, the incentive amount was 10 per cent of eligible construction costs up to a maximum of $6,400 per unit.

A total of four grant applications were processed during the 1985/86 fiscal year representing an expenditure of $24,937.

MORTGAGE ASSISTANCE BRANCH

The Mortgage Assistance Branch administers the Alberta Heritage Fund Modified Mortgage Interest Reduction Program and was responsible for the winddown of the original Alberta Heritage Fund Mortgage Interest Reduction Program.

Alberta Heritage Fund Mortgage Interest Reduction Program was designed to relieve financial pressure on Alberta homeowners caused by high mortgage interest rates existing at that time. Funded by the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund, the program commenced on September 1, 1982 and ended on August 31, 1984.

By the end of March 1986, a total of 163,502 applications had been received. Of those, 160,310 applications were approved for a total grant expenditure of $231,897,079.

Alberta Heritage Fund Modified Mortgage Interest Reduction Program was announced July 16, 1984 to assist those homeowners who would have faced financial hardship as a result of the termination of their benefits under the original program. This Modified Program, which was also funded by the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund, commenced on September 1, 1984. It was scheduled to end on August 31, 1985, but was extended until December 31, 1986.

In order to be eligible for benefits under the Modified Program, the homeowner must have received benefits from the Alberta Heritage Fund Mortgage Interest Reduction Program during the month of August 1984. In addition, the homeowner must spend more than 35 per cent of household income on mortgage payments. The reimbursement benefits are based on the least of:

— the monthly benefit for which the homeowner was eligible in August 1984 under the Alberta Heritage Fund Mortgage Interest Reduction Program;

— the sum required to effectively reduce the mortgage interest rate to 12.5 per cent; or

— the sum required to reduce the monthly mortgage payment to 35 per cent of household income.

Benefits are usually paid on a monthly basis and may be paid retroactively.

By March 31, 1986 a total of 9,079 applicants had applied for assistance under the Modified Program; 4,529 had been approved, with 994 being approved during 1985/86. A total of $3,703,980 in benefits was paid to March 31, 1986.

MORTGAGE INTEREST REVIEW BOARD

The Mortgage Interest Review Board was established in October 1982 to receive applications for review where the applicant was deemed ineligible or where calculation of assistance was disputed. The Review Board is responsible for review for both programs. Recent activity has focused on the Modified Program. Hearings are held by the Review Board as often as required at suitable locations throughout the province.

By the end of March 1986, 5,798 applications, which were received under the original program, were reviewed by the Mortgage Interest Review Board. Of this number, 4,674 were allowed and 1,124 denied.

Between April 1, 1985 and March 31, 1986, 380 applications were reviewed. Of this, 253 were allowed and 127 denied.

By the end of March 1986, the Mortgage Interest Review Board had reviewed 763 applications under the Modified Program. Of these applications, 472 were allowed and 291 denied.

II. Rural Housing Division

The Rural Housing Division is responsible for the provision of financial, administrative, construction and renovation training assistance, which is directly linked to the provision of modest and affordable housing. Assistance also is provided in the area of pre- and post-occupancy counselling on topics such as: responsibilities of tenancy and home ownership, home maintenance and arrears counselling.

The client groups are rural and mostly northern families and senior citizens, whose sources of income are often derived from seasonal employment, supplemented with unemployment insurance, social assistance or pension benefits. A smaller percentage of the clients' income may be derived from small business or farmstead operations. In all cases, the income-range served is low to modest.

The programs are designed to meet specific needs where conventional housing programs are not suitable or available. All of the programs utilize the principle of direct client and community involvement. Liaison and co-operation with federal and provincial agencies are a fundamental element of the operation, and utilization of the building supply and construction industries is essential.

The division has three branches: Rural Home Assistance Branch, Rural and Native Housing Branch, and Rural Emergency Home Branch.

The Educational Resource Branch was transferred to Financial Assistance and Research Division effective July 1, 1985.

RURAL HOME ASSISTANCE BRANCH

The objective of the Rural Home Assistance Branch is to assist isolated communities and Metis Settlements to provide acceptable modest housing for low to moderate income families who do not qualify for regular home or home improvement financing. Assistance is provided in the form of grants for materials to enable these communities to construct new homes or improve existing homes of qualifying families. The branch offers administrative and technical assistance to help develop managerial and technical skills within the communities assisted.

The Rural Home Assistance Branch provides assistance through five programs:

Isolated Communities Housing Program,
Metis Settlement Housing Program,
Rural Home Repair Program,
Northern Water and Sewer Program, and
Rural Housing Employment Support Program.

The branch disseminates information on assistance available through these programs and ensures that need and eligibility criteria are met by the community and applicant families. Each approved community has a registered non-profit Housing Association. Grants are provided to these Housing Associations on behalf of approved applicant families. The Associations ensure that all projects are completed in accordance with their agreements with the Province of Alberta. The branch provides construction supervision and technical guidance through building inspections and monitors the financial cost of projects.

Isolated Communities Housing Program assisted 28 approved isolated or semi-isolated communities to construct new, modest homes for eligible families. House plans are provided to each approved community and they are assisted in planning their housing project. During the 1985/86 fiscal year, fifty-eight families were assisted through grants totalling $1,147,205.

The following isolated communities were assisted during this period:

	Units Built
Wanyandie Flats	3
Muskeeg Cee Pee	1
Victor Lake	2
Susa Creek	2
Kamisake	1
Joachim	1
Grovedale	4
Eureka River	1
Cadotte Lake	4
Trout Lake	6
Chipewyan Lake	3
Desmarais/Wabasca	8
Calling Lake	4
Owl River	4
Janvier	3
Ft. McKay	2
Ft. Chipewyan	5
Conklin	4
	58

Metis Settlement Housing Program provides funds for the construction of new, modest homes for eligible families living on the eight Metis Settlements — Fishing Lake, Elizabeth, Caslan, Kikino, East Prairie, Gift Lake, Peavine and Paddle Prairie. A total of 56 families were assisted during this fiscal year, with a cost commitment of $1,180,260.

	Units Built
Elizabeth	6
Fishing Lake	4
Caslan	7
Kikino	10
Gift Lake	8
Peavine	6
East Prairie	6
Paddle Prairie	9
	56

Rural Home Repair Program assists all approved isolated communities and Metis Settlements to repair and upgrade existing homes of eligible families. A list of required repairs and a cost estimate for materials is prepared by the Rural Home Assistance Branch. A grant is provided to the Housing Associations based on these estimates. During this fiscal year, 46 applications were approved at a total cost of $188,593.

Rural Housing Employment Support Program provides funds to enable approved isolated communities to employ and train a local work force to construct new homes and to repair existing homes. Through the Employment Initiatives Package of Alberta Manpower, the Rural Home Assistance Branch received an allocation of $500,000. This funding assisted 15 isolated communities to employ 65 trainees during a six-month program.

Northern Water and Sewer Program enables all approved isolated communities and Metis Settlements to install roughed-in indoor plumbing in new homes constructed through their housing program and to provide complete plumbing systems for special medical/disabled applicants. During the 1985/86 fiscal year, grants were approved to install roughed-in plumbing in 161 homes built through the program, for a total of $161,000 and 36 applicants were approved for complete plumbing systems at a cost of $174,230. Through a cost-sharing agreement with Alberta Municipal Affairs, an additional $116,641 was granted to provide exterior plumbing services for 50 families on the eight Metis Settlements. During this fiscal year, 237 families were assisted through a total cost commitment of $451,771 by the Alberta Government.

RURAL AND NATIVE HOUSING BRANCH

The Rural and Native Housing Program has been in effect since 1974 and was previously administered as a section of the Co-operative Housing Action Program Branch. On March 1, 1985, the Rural and Native Housing Branch was established as a separate branch of the Rural Housing Division.

The Rural and Native Housing Program is a cost-shared Federal/Provincial program. Funding for the construction of the housing units is provided by Alberta Mortgage and Housing Corporation, while subsidies and other costs are shared on a 75/25 basis, with the Federal Government contributing 75 per cent. The objective of the Rural and Native Housing Branch is to provide low to moderate income families with the opportunity to purchase modest housing in selected areas of rural Alberta. Housing provided through the program complies with provincial, local and Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation requirements.

During 1985/86, 86 Albertans were assisted under the Rural and Native Housing Program. A breakdown of regions is as follows:

Region	Families Approved
Peace River	17
Bonnyville	52
South	17
	86

The branch also completed post-occupancy repairs on a total of 56 homes during 1985/86. Total cost of these repairs was $457,624 on 56 units. The repairs were carried out in the following regions:

Region	Post-Occupancy Repairs
Peace River	12
Bonnyville	2
South	42
	56

In addition to providing housing, the program also provides advice and guidance to participants on matters related to the purchase of the home, homeownership responsibilites, personal management of finances and home maintenance.

The Rural and Native Housing Branch also has 108 rental units which are administered by the Alberta Mortgage and Housing Corporation.

Region	Rental Units
Peace River	75
Bonnyville	25
South	8
	108

It is the intent of the Rural and Native Housing Branch to market these units to eligible program applicants.

A total of 1,341 families currently own or rent homes under the Rural and Native Housing Program.

RURAL EMERGENCY HOME BRANCH

This program assists qualified low to moderate income, rural families and senior citizens who may face the following types of emergencies:

— their home is destroyed by fire, flood or storm, and the family needs a place to live immediately;
— their home is overcrowded; or
— it is not safe or healthy to live in.

The Rural Emergency Home Program also may provide units to families waiting for permanent housing, or for families relocating permanently to new communities to take advantage of employment opportunities. Emergency homes may be located anywhere in the province, but are primarily available to Albertans living in villages, towns, Improvement Districts, Isolated Communities, on Metis Settlements, and Indian Reserves through separate agreements with Band Councils. The program provides an opportunity for ownership at substantial savings to tenants who are interested in purchasing the mobile home.

Advice on tenant responsibilities is given to families on topics such as home maintenance and payment of rent. During occupancy, tenants are responsible for minor maintenance and repairs, while the branch does major repairs.

During the year, the branch received 981 applications for emergency housing and approved 232. Under the sales policy 64 units were sold. One hundred new units were purchased during the 1985/86 fiscal year. There are 113 units on Indian Reserves guaranteed by the Federal Government for full cost recovery.

As of March 31, 1986, there were 1,193 units in the Rural Emergency Home Program, of which 989 were occupied.

III. Planning Secretariat

The Planning Secretariat provides policy and program planning assistance and coordination to the provincial housing organization — the Department of Housing and Alberta Mortgage and Housing Corporation. The Secretariat is organized into branches as noted below, but major projects often require the participation of all groups.

General Planning Secretariat Initiatives (1985 - 1986)

— Federal/Provincial Negotiations resulted in the signing of a new Global Agreement on Social Housing in December 1985. The Planning Secretariat played a leading role in these negotiations.

— Provided policy assistance and background to the Housing Ministers' Conference in July 1985.

— The first Federal/Provincial Three Year Plan was prepared. The plan outlines major areas of program and policy activity for a three year period, on a revolving basis.

— Minister's Briefing Books: These books are prepared in advance of Legislature sittings by the Secretariat, for the use of the Minister. They summarize major housing issues.

MARKET AND ECONOMIC ANALYSIS BRANCH

The Market and Economic Analysis Branch provides ongoing economic research, market and program analysis in the area of housing. The branch undertakes:

— economic analysis involving the forecasting, surveying, interpretation and dissemination of information about housing;

— regional analysis relating to the expected housing requirements in specific areas or communities in the Province; and

— a program analysis function, usually in conjunction with other branches in the Planning Secretariat.

Major activities over the year included:

— a monthly report on residential construction activity in the Province;

— a montly report on residential mortgage foreclosures;

— a quarterly publication of housing market trends in Alberta;

— an annual survey and report on vacancy rates and rental costs in 88 communities;

— short- and medium-term forecasts of expected housing construction levels and housing requirements in the Province;

— an assessment of the impact on housing of major resource and economic development in a number of communities across Alberta; and

— a study of the characteristics and role of the "secondary" housing market, i.e., projects of less than six units, not usually covered in vacancy rate, rent level and other housing surveys

POLICY AND PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT BRANCH (DEPARTMENT)

The Policy and Program Development Branch (Department) examines and evaluates alternative directions for programs delivered by the Department of Housing. To achieve these goals the branch:

— assesses housing policy alternatives and researches client housing needs;

— monitors and evaluates programs;

— develops guidelines for new and modified housing programs;

— assists in developing administrative procedures for new or modified housing programs;

— undertakes planning studies; and

— coordinates and participates in interdepartmental and intergovernmental policy development activities.

Highlights of branch activities during the year were:

— a review of the Co-operative Housing Action Program;

— a review of the Home Adaptation Program;

— the completion of a study on rental housing inventories and needs in small Northern communities;

— the development of grant calculation alternatives for the Unique Homes Assistance Program;

— a review of the Rural Emergency Home Program on Indian Reserves;

— completion of a study on the transfer of 42 Rural and Native Housing units to the Rural Home Assistance Program;

— research on the home renovation industry in Alberta; and

— involvement in negotiation on Federal/Provincial housing issues.

POLICY AND PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT BRANCH (CORPORATION)

The Policy and Program Development Branch (Corporation) is responsible for the review and evaluation of housing programs delivered by Alberta Mortgage and Housing Corporation. The branch is also responsible for conducting market assessment for all applications for social housing projects and, based on the assessments, recommends the appropriate course of action.

In order to achieve its goals, the branch:

- assesses alternative housing prices;
- monitors and evaluates programs;
- develops guidelines for new programs and recommends alternative guidelines for existing programs;
- researches housing need and demand; and
- participates in interdepartmental and intergovernmental policy development.

Highlights of branch activities during the year were:

- participation on an interdepartmental committee examining the long-term care situation in Alberta;
- completion of market assessments for requests for housing projects;
- an analysis of AMHC's C.H.I.P./M.A.P. portfolio which led to the development of a restructuring option;
- completion of a study of seniors' housing on Metis Settlements;
- a review of general mortgage insurance and the risks associated with mortgage insurance;
- participation on AMHC's Land Management Working Committee which examined the marketing of lots and the issue of expiring of land agreements; and
- completion of a report on the hard-to-house in Calgary.

IV. Finance and Administration Division

The Finance and Administration Division performs the following functions:

— coordinates, consolidates, analyses and recommends departmental budgets;

— ensures the accuracy and validity of all financial transactions, including prompt processing of these transactions and collection of departmental revenues;

— provides comprehensive administrative services and advice to the Department;

— provides comprehensive EDP and word processing services and advice to the Department;

— provides advice and professional services in the development of communication materials to inform the public about the department's policies, programs and services;

— provides personnel services to the department; and

— reviews departmental operating procedures.

This mandate is carried out by six branches: Financial, Administrative, Systems, Communication, Personnel and Operations Review.

FINANCIAL SERVICES BRANCH

This branch is responsible for the following activities:

— coordinates, reviews and recommends the departmental budget;

— monitors expenditures against budgetary intentions by issuing reports and recommending fiscal solutions;

— verifies all expenditures associated with departmental budgets;

— issues financial information documents to program areas and provides interpretation and advice as required;

— conducts reviews of financial documents to program areas and provides interpretation and advice as required;

— conducts reviews of financial concepts among expenditure and/or receiving officers to assist in fulfilling their responsibilities; and

— ensures that all departmental receivables and revenues are properly documented, collected and reported.

During the fiscal year, the accounts payable staff processed a monthly average of 2,100 invoices which totalled $284 million over the 12 months.

Accounts receivable dealt with an average of 1,500 transactions monthly, which totalled approximately $2.7 million for the fiscal year, and distributed salary cheques for the Department.

ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES BRANCH

The Administrative Services Branch provides support services to branches of the Department in thirteen locations:

The supply and services centre provided the following services.

— purchase of material and supplies, leasing services, equipment and furniture;

— vehicle administration, insurance coordination, mailing and courier service, space allocations, maintenance of facilities, parking, telecommunications and travel co-ordination;

— coordination and control of fixed assets;

— telephone reception and information services to the public;

— central printing and duplication services; and

— contract administration.

SYSTEMS AND INFORMATION SERVICES BRANCH

This branch is responsible for the following activities

— formulation of short and long range plans and objectives for departmental information and office automation systems;

— planning and managing the development and implementation of new information and office automation systems;

— providing maintenance, technical and consultative support for operational information and office automation systems; and

— providing direction and assistance in the development and implementation of Records and Forms Management policies, procedures and guidelines.

During the year, new systems were developed and implemented for the Rural Home Assistance and Rural and Native Housing Programs, as well as for departmental finance and administration functions. In addition, a major enhancement to the Rural Emergency Home Program system was commenced. Maintenance, technical support, and consultative services were provided for the following systems as well as other administrative support programs:

— Alberta Heritage Fund Mortgage Interest Reduction Program;

— Alberta Heritage Fund Modified Mortgage Interest Reduction Program;

— Senior's Home Improvement Program;
— Senior's Housing Registry;
— Apartment Vacancy Survey;
— Alberta Rental Investment Incentive Program;
— Rural Emergency Home Program; and
— Financial Information System.

Office automation support and consultative services were provided to all branches of the Department. A comprehensive study was conducted to determine the Department's short-range and long-range office automation requirements.

During the past year the Records and Forms Management section continued the implementation of the standard Subject Classification System throughout the Department.

Approximately four hundred cubic feet of inactive records were transferred to the Alberta Records Centre and approximately one-hundred-and-eighty cubic feet of semi-active records were transferred from various branches to the Department's semi-active storage facility.

COMMUNICATION SERVICES BRANCH

The major responsibility of this branch is to provide communication services in support of departmental goals.

To help meet these goals, Communication Services provides advice and professional expertise in the development of communication materials to inform the public about the Department's policies, programs and services. Information is provided through news releases, brochures, factsheets, reports, audio-visual productions, displays and advertising.

The branch provides internal communication advice and assistance and also is responsible for facilitating and coordinating joint communication plans with other Alberta Government departments.

Major activities:

During the past year, the focus of branch activities has been in support of the Innovative Housing Grants Program, the Alberta Awards of Excellence in Housing Design, the Rural Emergency Home Program, the Rural Home Assistance Program and the Rural and Native Housing Program.

Communication Services Branch provided media services, public relations consultation, writing and editorial services, as well as coordinating graphic design, print, photographic, distribution and display services. The branch continued to monitor and implement the department visual identity program, as well as administering ISBN and ISSN numbering for all departmental publications.

Communication Services Branch supervised updating of several audio-visual presentations, advertising, and co-ordinated special events.

PERSONNEL SERVICES BRANCH

This branch has responsibility, authority and accountability for the following functions:

— coordinating and implementing the classification of employees, ensuring propriety of all transactions;
— coordinating, administering and implementing comprehensive services for the Department in the areas of:
  — recruitment and selection;
  — training and development;
  — manpower planning;
  — personnel planning;
  — career counselling,
  — salary and benefits; and
  — occupational health and safety.
— investigating, analyzing and recommending solutions for employee relations' problems; and
— coordinating the management and employee appraisal process and administering the related systems and procedures.

Major activities:

Activity within the Personnel Branch remained constant.

Staffing and classification activity continued at active levels. A total of 65 classification actions and 49 staff recruitment change/transactions occurred.

Other branch activity included resolution of a number of employee relations' issues with respect to the administration of the Collective Agreement.

Activity regarding training and development as a supplement to course work provided in the Government training calendar included:

— a Department-oriented survival and first aid workshop for employees who travel extensively in remote areas; and
— technical training through educational institutions for employees engaged in housing rehabilitation.

OPERATIONS REVIEW

Operations Review ensures that internal control systems exist with respect to each program, that consistent accounting practices are being applied, and that administrative guidelines and procedures are being followed ensuring that operational efficiency, economy and effectiveness are evident in all departmental operations.

During the year reviews were done in the Alberta Heritage Fund Modified Mortgage Interest Reduction Program, the Seniors' Home Improvement Program and the Rural Home Assistance Program.

V. Financial Statement

COMPARATIVE SUMMARY OF PROGRAM EXPENDITURES

	1984/85 ($000)	1985/86* ($000)
Departmental Support Services		
Minister's Office	217	193
Deputy Minister's Office	165	149
Administrative Support	1,038	1,302
Personnel Administration	177	189
Communication Services	37	48
Total Vote 1	1,634	1,881
Policy Development and Financial Assistance for Housing		
Planning Secretariat	1,021	1,660
Financial Assistance and Research	2,001	1,900
Rural Housing Division	4,033	12,587
Financial Assistance for Housing	52,374	33,639
Total Vote 2	59,429	49,786
Alberta Heritage Fund Mortgage Interest Reduction Program		
Program Support	4,023	2,153
Financial Assistance	32,906	2,197
Total Vote 3	36,929	4,350
Alberta Mortgage and Housing Corporation	185,967	242,351
Total Vote 4	185,967	242,351
TOTAL	283,959	298,368

*Unaudited

Appendix A — Committees

The Department of Housing works towards its objectives through a number of committees. Among them are:

— **Alberta Planning Board**
Reviews regional plans, finances the Regional Planning Commission, decides on subdivision appeals and Subdivision Regulation Waivers and advises the Minister of Municipal Affairs on the Planning Act and Provincial land use policy.

— **Interdepartmental Committee on Regulatory Reform**
Coordinates departmental responses on private sector submissions made to the Caucus Committee on Regulatory Reform.

— **Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation/Alberta Mortgage and Housing Corporation/Department of Housing Liaison Committee**
Reviews joint programs and exchanges information on matters of Federal/Provincial concern.

— **Economic Committee of Canadian Home Builders Association**
Reviews and forecasts housing in Calgary.

— **Alberta Home Builders Association/Housing Liaison Committee**
Exchanges information on areas of mutual concern.

— **Manufactured Housing Advisory Council**
Provides a forum for industry and government on issues related to the manufactured housing industry.

— **Canadian Home Builders Association Technical Research Committee**
Assists, encourages and coordinates technical research to produce economical housing of improved design, and educates members, public, and government regarding promising housing innovations.

— **Rural and Native Tripartite Committee**
Coordinates the Federal/Provincial Rural and Native Housing Programs in Alberta.

— **Innovative Housing Grants Committee**
Reviews and approves applications.